South Korean Space Agency Launch Irks North

Editor's Note: A very good example of how a good tool can cut both ways, the South's actions may mirror the North's, but their respective intents couldn't be farther apart. Peaceful space development produces jobs and technologies that benefit society, rocket science for weaponry is at best expended effort better used eslewhere if not for the enemies beyond the gates.

[1]SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said Monday it will closely watch the international response to South Korea's planned satellite launch after Pyongyang was brought before the U.N. Security Council for what it said was a similar move.

South Korea is aiming to launch a satellite into space from its own soil for the first time as early as next week.

The North said its April rocket launch also carried a satellite and was part of its peaceful space development program. However, the U.S. and neighboring countries said that was a cover story by the North, and it actually tested advanced missile technology that violated U.N. sanctions imposed on Pyongyang.

The Security Council subsequently slapped new sanctions on three North Korean companies after the launch.

The North, in response, quit nuclear disarmament talks with the U.S., South Korea, Japan, China and Russia, arguing the sanctions violated the talks' principle of respect for sovereignty and equality.

On Monday, Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry said it "will closely watch" how members of six-party nuclear talks would respond to South Korea's launch, because that "will

once again clearly prove whether the principle of equality exists or has collapsed."

A ministry statement — carried by the official Korean Central News Agency — did not say what action North Korea would take if South Korea's launch was not referred to the Security Council.

Kim Bo-hyun, a spokesman at the Science Ministry, said South Korea's satellite launch was for peaceful purposes only and its plan has been transparently conducted. He said it was "not appropriate" to compare the South's launch to the North's.

South Korea initially planned to launch the satellite from its southern coast in late July but failed to do so because of a technical glitch.

South Korea has not set an exact date for the rescheduled launch but it may take place as early as Aug. 18, Kim said.

Under a 2007 six-party deal, the North pledged to abandon its nuclear program in exchange for aid and security guarantees. The disarmament process, however, has been stalled since last year over a disagreement with Washington over how to verify the North's past atomic activities.

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